**Foundations of College Writing – From Topic to Problem/Question**

Below are guidelines for changing an issue/event/person to a problem or question about which you can make an argument.

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| **Possible Topic** | **What Others Have Said** | **Problems/Questions** | **What I Can Add to the Conversation** |
| Example: *Taylor Swift* | Taylor Swift is a star because her music appeals to lots of different people  Taylor Swift is a star because of her looks and personality | Why is Taylor Swift so popular? What genre(s) does her music fit into? What are her musical influences?  What makes a person a celebrity? Is it a good thing or a bad thing that we judge celebrities based on their lives as well as their art? | History of her music career and what other musicians shaped it.  Analysis of her songs (music and lyrics) showing similarities/differences with country, rock, etc.  Identify qualities that make a person famous; show how Taylor exhibits these qualities  Evaluate celebrity qualities; argue for why certain ones are more or less important |
| Negative effects of Music | The negative lyrics that are heard in music in recent days can cause an increase in violent behavior  Playing music loudly or through ear buds can damage hearing. | Do the benefits of music outweigh the bad, does the negative influences of drugs, sex, and violence in music shape the newer generations into trouble makers?  Is their a way to make listening to personal music devices safer, and less damaging? | Look at different pop music throughout time. Then compare to crime rates but makes sure to account for outside influences. Look for possible direct connections from music to these modern problems.  Compare rates of hearing impairment through different generations. Look for new research studies on the topic which are trying to help. |